DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 479 717 SP 041 627

AUTHOR	Ellis, Gary D.
TITLE	Wrestling J. B. Nash.
PUB DATE	2003-04-05
NOTE	15p.; J.B. Nash Lecture given at the Annual Meeting of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (Philadelphia, PA, April 1-5, 2003).
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Child Development; Elementary Secondary Education; *Ethics; Health Promotion; *Physical Education; *Physical Fitness; *Playgrounds; Public Health; *Recreational Activities

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on how between 1965 and the present, the field of recreation has and has not accomplished the goals of author and educator J. B. Nash's in regard to recreation, physical education, and health, focusing on public recreation sponsored by city governments, county governments, and special tax districts. The paper looks at Nash's beliefs about: playgrounds; daily experiences as they relate to personal development, character development, and creativity; ethics; and physical fitness. It concludes that the country has made good progress with respect to understanding experiences, developing ethical positions, and promoting fitness, noting that an enduring commitment is needed to sustain the progress. However, it asserts that it is necessary to revisit the issue of what a playground ought to be, since Nash's vision of playgrounds provides much greater opportunity to build individuals and communities than more contemporary perspectives. (Contains 12 references.) (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 479 717

J. B. Nash Lecture, 2003

"Wrestling J.B. Nash"

by

Gary D. Ellis, PhD
Professor and Chair
Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
University of Utah

April 5, 2003, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Gary D. Ellis

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SP041627

Thank you for selecting me to contribute the J.B. Nash lecture this year. Ordinarily, one would point out that that it is an honor to be selected, but I would much prefer that we think of the J.B. Nash lecture as an annual celebration of our collective contributions. Let me show you what I mean by this.

One evening last fall, I had the opportunity to watch on television as Larry Csonka was inducted into the Football Hall of Fame (I was exercising in a "cardio-lounge." Really.). Mr. Csonka was a running back for the Miami Dolphins, during some of the best years in the history of that franchise. In receiving the award, Mr. Csonka emphasized the key role of the men who formed his offensive line. "It is easy to get into the hall of fame," Mr. Csonka explained, "if you run behind people whose hearts are this big (hands extended above head) and asses this broad (hands extended from waist level)."

I will abstain from commenting on features of your anatomy, but I will say that it is easy to be selected to deliver the J.B. Nash lecture if you are taught by colleagues with hearts as big as those of Csonka's offensive linemen and whose intellects are the size of this room. You have written the textbooks and journal articles from which I have learned, you have given me knowledge while working with me in professional associations, I have coauthored work with some of you, and others of you have literally been teachers in classes that I have taken. Thus, like Larry Csonka ran behind a talented and committed offensive line, so have I run behind you.

A more academic way of saying the same thing is through the words of Lewis Thomas, in The Lives of a Cell (1974):

> *The human brain is the most public organ on the face of the earth, open to everything, sending out messages to everything. To be sure, it is hidden away in bone and conducts internal affairs in secrecy, but virtually all the business is the direct result of thinking that has already occurred in other minds...The whole dear notion of one's self—marvelous old free-willed, free enterprising, autonomous, independent, isolated island of a self—is myth."*

Thus, the lecture is an honor to us all. Let us collectively celebrate our success today.

Many of you who know me are aware of my fascination with the process of science as a way of knowing. Some would probably speculate that I value no knowledge that is not backed by a regression analysis. Actually, I find many other ways of knowing to be equally fascinating. I recently had the great pleasure of serving on a university committee alongside a film studies professor. Conversations with him led me to reflect on significant learning that I have received from film and drama. King Arthur of Camelot, for example, teaches us, among many other things, that "strength is not violence and compassion is not weakness." From "The King and I" we learn of the excruciating demands of change and of the nobility of people who dare to comprehend that which is radically different from that with which they are comfortable. From Esmeralda of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," we learn about humility. In one of her songs within the play, voices praying to God ask for love, fame, wealth, and for "glory to shine on [their] name." "I ask for nothing," the poor gypsy sings, "I can get by. But God bless those less fortunate than I." And

finally, from "I Love Lucy," we learn to cherish those who are close to us and to not take everything else so seriously.

The theme for this presentation is also based on a film. Several years ago, a movie named "Wrestling Ernest Hemingway" was produced. The movie starred Robert Duvall, Richard Harris, and Shirley McLain. The characters played by Duvall and Harris were elderly retirees living in Key West, Florida. One of them tried desperately to cling to his long lost youth. He kept telling people about the time that he wrestled Ernest Hemingway.

Following that theme, this lecture is titled, "Wrestling J.B. Nash." Dr. Nash passed away in 1965, after a long and devoted career of advancing recreation, physical education, and health. His passions challenged us to grow our professions in particular ways. This lecture is about how we, between 1965 and the present, have and have not accomplished in terms of Nash's passions and dreams. As I proceed, please keep in mind that the context is largely public recreation, that is, recreation sponsored by city governments, county governments, and special tax districts.

Success in an athletic event such as wrestling often begins by understanding one's opponent. Who was J.B. Nash? Nash was born in 1886 and lived until 1965 (79 years). His wife, Emma, edited at least one of the 15 textbooks that he authored. His children were Janet and Roderick and he had at least one granddaughter, Gail.

In terms of professional appointments, Nash served as the Director of Physical Education for the State of California for two years. He then served as Superintendent of Recreation for Oakland, California, from 1919-1926. For most of his career, Dr. Nash served as chair of the Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation at New York University. He was recruited out of retirement to serve as dean of the College of Recreation, Physical Education, and Health at Brigham Young University from 1954-1956. Certainly he must be among the very few non Mormons who has served as an administrator at BYU.

Being only approximately 50 miles or so from BYU, my school, the University of Utah, maintains quite a substantial friendly rivalry with BYU. It thus pains me somewhat to admit that they had their College name right when Nash was dean. Notice that "recreation" precedes "physical education" and "health" in that name!

Nash was also known for exceptional professional leadership in recreation, physical education, and health. Among the more significant of his roles are the following:

- *President, AAHPER*
- *Founder, American Academy of Physical Education*
- *Member of the Outdoor Recreation Review Commission, 1961-1962*
- *Recipient, Clark C. Hetherington Award, 1955*
- *Distinguished Service to the Health of Children of Our Nation," School Nurse Teacher Association, 1958*
- *Chairman of School Health and Physical Education, National Education Association*
- *Member, Joint Health Committee of the American Medical Association*

- *Royal Hungarian College of Physical Education in Budapest medal, 1936*
- *Sport Club of Iran "Honorable Mention"*
- *Fulbright Professor in India, cited for "bringing happiness for the whole of humanity."*
- *Luther Halsey Gulick Medal for "Notable Service in Health Education," 1940*

Among the 15 books that Nash authored are the following:

- *The Organization and Administration of Playgrounds and Recreation , 1927*
- *Building Morale, 1942*
- *Physical Education: It's Interpretations and Objectives and its Relationship to Health Education and Recreation , 1950*
- *Philosophy of Recreation and Leisure, 1953, 1960*
- *Recreation, Pertinent Readings: Guideposts to the Future , 1965*
- *Teachable Moments , 1938*

Notwithstanding these impressive contributions, the thrust of this lecture is on a set of intellectual and professional passions that Dr. Nash possessed. Among a number of themes that are evident across his writings are deep concerns about the following:

- Playgrounds
- Meaningful experiences that develop character
- Ethical Behavior
- Fitness, or "Optimum Health"

These form the challenges of our wrestling match with Nash. How have we performed with respect to these since Nash's death in 1965? As we review these, let me remind you again that it is essential to keep in mind that the context is largely local government- sponsored parks and recreation. Such contemporary concerns of our discipline as tourism, event management, hospitality management, golf management, and the like were not yet on our professional intellectual agenda.

J.B. Nash on Playgrounds

The first page in Nash's 1927 book reads "Dedicated to the Child Without a Playground." Nash also emphasized in that book his belief that "Better a playground without a schoolhouse than a schoolhouse without a playground." At first glance, we might expect to score points in wrestling with J.B. Nash due to our highly successful playground safety initiatives. The National Playground Safety Institute and the playground safety inspection certification program is certainly a significant development. But, as Nash pointed out we must be careful to define our terms. "[F]ew areas need the admonition "define your terms," as does that concerned with Leisure" (Nash, 1965, p. ix). That admonition applies to the term, "playgrounds" as well as leisure.

To Nash, a playground had three essential elements: (1) a safe place to play, (2) skilled leadership, and (3) a well-selected program of activities. In his book devoted to playgrounds, Nash asserts that playgrounds may exist on parks, on school property, in vacant lots, and at one's own dwelling. In terms of our "learning from film" theme, Nash would recognize a playground in the movie, The

Sandlot. Much of that story was based on the adventures of a group of children who played together on a vacant lot, with no developed facilities whatsoever.

I completed the NPSI playground safety inspector training a few years ago. That training confirmed my belief that the Nashian concept of a playground, a magical place where kids run, rest, laugh, cry, fight, kiss, make friends, connect, and play games and sports using cardboard boxes for baseball bases and netless hoops and compacted soil for basketball courts has been reduced in meaning to an area where swings, slides, climbers, and other apparatus are installed. In Utah, I know of only one true summer playground program, which is a result of the efforts of Tracey Heun, Director of Parks and Recreation for the city of Clearfield. Other notable programs on this endangered species list are the rural recreation projects conducted in South Carolina through Clemson University and in Illinois, through the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. Limiting use of the word "playground" to apparatus areas signifies that public recreation has largely "thrown in the towel" on the provision of daily recreation programs and leadership in neighborhood parks and community centers.

This is not to say that apparatus areas, NPSI, and the like are not worthy developments. Indeed they are. When I speak to our "PRT Areas and Facilities Management Class" on playground safety, I point out to them that our 46,000 seat football stadium could, each year, be filled five times with children hurt so severely on playground apparatus that emergency room attention is required. Some have permanent disabilities and some die. Playground apparatus area safety is indeed a vital concern. The problem is that apparatus areas are only one component of a larger and significantly more vital concept: playground. To confuse the two is to ignore our greater responsibilities for fitness, character development, and community cohesiveness. I have yet to meet a person who has developed character or maintained her or his fitness through 45 minutes per day exercise sessions on swings, climbers, and slides.

Does it matter? I am quite sure that it does. Just two incidents from among hundreds that I remember from my four summers as a playground leader illustrate the ways that playgrounds facilitate development. For four consecutive summers, I served as director of a (Nashian) playground in a middle-income neighborhood of a large metropolitan area. To my knowledge, all residents of that neighborhood were Caucasian. Then one day an African American family moved into the neighborhood. That family, I learned, had previously resided in a community that was predominantly African American. The family had a son, a spirited seven year old, who initially harbored enormous suspicions and exhibited significant hostility toward all of us whose skin was lighter in color. I regret that I have forgotten this kid's name, for he became very special to me. Let's call him Eric.

One day shortly after Eric starting visiting the playground, I was leading kids in an informal softball game. In order to optimize the opportunity for action, I had chosen to serve as pitcher for both teams. I figured that I could consistently deliver slow floating balls to the middle of the strike zone of every batter. As I caught a ball returned from a catcher (a player waiting to bat), I felt a tug on my left leg. I looked down to see Eric glaring at me. "I wanna pitch!" he demanded. I replied that it would be fair only if I pitched to both teams. "I wanna pitch!" Eric demanded again. "Ok, Eric, you can pitch" I said, thinking that this might help him integrate with other kids a bit.

The first batter that Eric faced was a big 13 year old kid named Todd. Eric's first pitch sailed high over Todd's head. The next pitch rolled over Todd's feet. Then Ernie found his niche. He placed a ball directly in line with the sweet spot that Todd was hoping for. Todd swung and connected solidly with the ball. Crack! Todd hit a line drive, right into Eric's forehead. Eric fell to the ground, apparently unconscious for a second or two. Then, terrified, he jumped to his feet and ran screaming and crying toward me, with his arms outstretched to be held. I imagine that his mom and dad had been in similar circumstances many times. "Help me, big white man," he said with big, terrified eyes, "I'm scared." Although I would never advocate a softball to the head as therapy for strained relations between European and African Americans, Moslems and Christians, or Mormons and Gentiles, I must say that I have never seen an attitude changed so fast. As I said, Eric became very special to me during the ensuing weeks. I hope he is doing well today.

The other story also involves Todd. Thirteen year old Todd was playing on a softball team that I organized to play in a single elimination tournament involving kids from other neighborhood parks. After Todd, the next oldest kid was 11 and all others were 8, 9, and 10 years old. Other park directors had all stacked their team with the players at the top of the age range, 13 years. During our first game in the tournament, the kids on our older, stronger opposing team invited Todd to play on their team when they advanced after beating us. Todd glanced at his much younger teammates and then stared back to his friends who were making the offer. "You haven't beat us yet," Todd replied. And we made a valiant effort that I will never forget: 8-6. Both Todd's teammates and the playground leader (me) learned something significant about determination that day. As Nash explained, playgrounds, in their broad sense, develop character. But we must think of them in much broader terms than apparatus areas.

J.B. Nash on Experiences

J.B. Nash cared deeply about the quality of daily experiences, as they relate to personal development, character development, and creativity. He devoted an entire book to morale, a topic that seems very different from his other works until you look inside. Morale, to Nash, was important not to the extent that it wins athletic events, but rather to the extent that it builds character and happiness. Of happiness, Nash wrote the following: "For happy people, each day is an adventure, with more to come tomorrow" (Nash, 1953, p. 79). Also, "[C]an we develop people eager for a day, a month, or a year to follow some favorite hobby? Can we hold on to curiosity? Can we make old age and retirement thrilling?" (Nash, 1953, p. 27). In contrast, Nash found an unengaged mind to be an unhealthy threat to the development of the individual and the functioning of society. He was critical of those who avoided challenges and became detached spectators rather than wrestling actively with life and its challenges.

> *"Where do [people] sleep while still awake? One can sleep at lectures, in classrooms, and many do in museums and church and be just as non alert as in physiological sleep. Nothing very interesting is going on, no problems are being solved, there is no thrill of mystery"* (Nash, 1953, p. 28-29).

So, what have we learned about how to engage people in character-enhancing immediate conscious experiences since 1965? I think it is fair to say that Csikszentmihalyi's "flow" concept has been the focus of most of our collective attention about daily experiences since 1985. Students in our undergraduate classes are taught about Csikszentmihalyi's interviews with surgeons,

dancers, rock climbers, and artists, leading to the identification of a state of total absorption that may emerge when conditions are right. Perhaps due to the heuristic value of the challenge by skill diagram that Csikszentmihalyi provided, we have advanced to our students the position that flow is a result of the interaction of challenge and skill. When these are in balance, (and, later in evolution of the flow model, above the individual's personal average), flow is assumed to result. In our applied discipline, we quickly looked to challenge and skill as variables that we can manipulate to increase the likelihood of recipients of our services having positive experiences.

One problem that we haven't noticed in our fledgling technology of experience is that the challenge by skill interaction doesn't work very well. Although studies of the interaction often reveal statistically significant effects of challenge by skill on experience, the relationship is quite weak, ranging from approximately .03 to .11. This means that between 89% and 97% of the variance in experience is unexplained by challenge and skill! Certainly, more powerful factors are "out there" waiting to be discovered.

Some of these secrets were revealed in Csikszentmihalyi's later works on flow. In Optimal Experience (1988), he provided a rich and complex intriguingly complex extension of the original flow model. He introduced the notion of the "autotelic personality" and he described the central role that the notion of "self" may play in consciousness and daily experience. Flow and the "self" is a particularly appealing partnership in terms of our potential for developing a technology for engineering experiences. Activities that affirm salient beliefs that individuals hold about themselves, or affirm identities, seem to elicit heightened arousal and affect. Thus, if J.B. Nash were with us today, we could probably induce an engaging experience by challenging him to convince us that "spectatoritis" is a significant concern. Spectatoritis was one of Nash's enduring concerns, and is a topic for which he is widely known. As an educational exercise, you might think of ways that you might engage other prominent figures. What kinds of activities and discussions might, for example, engage Dennis Rodman, Dan Quayle, Madonna, Donny Osmond, and Bill Clinton?

In his later works, Csikszentmihalyi also distinguished between developmental experiences that he called "enjoyment" and transitory sensory experiences that he called "pleasure." Others, including J.B. Nash, had emphasized that distinction previously, using other words to describe the two phenomena. J.B. Nash was, in fact, highly concerned about recreation participants being drawn to forms of recreation that served only the purpose of sensory stimulation and immediate pleasure. He was committed to the idea that experiences should build character, facilitate learning, and be a form of creative expression that facilitates human development. Csikszentmihalyi would have liked J.B. Nash.

Thus, the flow model has provided a point of departure for understanding immediate conscious experiences associated with recreation and it has served to further advance ideas about the developmental significance of immediate conscious experiences. Other frameworks are emerging as well. At least two of these are particularly notable. One is Martin Seligman's (2002) "authentic happiness," which parallels Aristotelian notions of how collections of experiences may, over time, lead to eudaimonia, or having lived the good life. I suspect that we will learn much more about authentic happiness during the next few years.

Another very promising model is Apter's (1997) reversal theory. In that theory, Apter describes three dimensions of experience, along which all human emotions may be located. These experiences include the telic vs. paratellic state, mastery vs. sympathy state, and the autic vs. alloic state. Specific environmental conditions provide "switches" that reverse experiences along these dimensions. Becoming oriented to a goal, for example, switches an individual from a paratellic state to a telic state. I was playfully absorbed in construction of this lecture during raging Utah snowstorms, for example, until a very nice associate at AALR politely reminded me that the narrative version of the lecture was due to her on February 20. Apter has shown that these reversals correspond directly to particular, identifiable patterns of brain activity. A paper on reversal theory is currently in press in Journal of Leisure Research and others currently exist in the psychology literature. More papers on the topic are certain to follow.

In summary, we have a very good start on development of a science and technology of human experience. J.B. Nash would be pleased and would encourage us to proceed.

J.B. Nash on ethics

J.B. Nash believed that some forms of recreation are better than others. He was quite concerned that recreation behavior in the modern world was becoming increasingly focused on immediate, transitory pleasure rather than activities that contribute to development of character, a better individual, and a better society. He considered the trend toward transitory, sensory experiences to be a result of the increasing creation and availability of labor saving machines, beginning with the industrial revolution. "Each human," Nash wrote in 1953," now has the equivalent of 40 slaves." The resulting free time is a significant threat if we fail to use our freedom in constructive ways:

- "We may literally be in the gladiatorial stage of Rome, where temples and arenas become larger and larger" (Nash, 1953, p. 26).
- Will [humans] be able to distinguish between good and evil? Will liberty be an asset to [humans] or will it be the rock on which [they are] wrecked?" (Nash, 1953, p. 47).
- "Will the great experiment of giving [humans] choice and freedom work out?" (Nash, 1953, p. 47).

These questions reveal Nash's passion for ethics; questions of right and wrong, good and bad. One of J.B. Nash's enduring contributions is his ethical model (1953). "How do you rate?" appears at the base of the model. Readers are thus implicitly challenged to identify the one of six levels that best describes their recreation behavior:

- Subzero: Acts performed against society
- Zero: Injury or detriment to Self
- 1: Entertainment, Amusement, Escape from Monotony, Killing Time
- 2: Emotional Participation
- 3. Active Participation
- 4: Creative Participation

The apex of the model describes "the inventor, the painter, the composer, and the maker of the model." Through his ethical model, Nash advanced his perspective on how we ought to lead our

lives with respect to recreation. The model is an ethical statement; some forms of recreation are deemed to be better than others.

So, where do we stand with respect to ethics? In my opinion, we have at least one very significant contribution to ethics as they relate to the recreation professional: the National Therapeutic Recreation Statement of Professional Ethics. That very thoughtful document outlines the range of acceptable behavior of therapeutic recreation specialists. It is thorough, thoughtful, comprehensive, and broadly applicable.

In the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism at the University of Utah, we have even adopted the document as a basis for our students' behavior as professionals. In one particularly useful application, one of our interns had engaged in behavior that we considered inappropriate, though that behavior was neither illegal nor a violation of academic policy. She had been given a personal loan from the resort at which she was serving as intern and she was refusing to repay the amount that she had been given. Due to a shortage of available workers, the resort was hard pressed to terminate her. The NTRS statement provided us with a foundation for corrective action. University of Utah policy permits sanctions for violations of professional ethics.

Another facet of ethics about which J.B. Nash was concerned was the privatization of parks and recreation. He was very committed to the position that public recreation is a fundamental good and that increased commercialization threatened to undermine the essential mission of public recreation:

- Will American, in a fool's paradise of riches and power, become content with turning over standards of the play life of our youth to institutions which value money above children?" (Nash, 1927, p. 15).
- "The philosophy of commercial recreation is buy something rather than be something" (Nash, 1927, p. 13).

The problem, fundamentally, is summarized in a model of goals of recreation that Nash advanced. The model distinguishes between immediate, pleasing outcomes and more complex and distal effects on individual development and character. Commercial recreation would focus its efforts on that which sells: the immediate experience. Lacking financial incentive, little to no effort would be devoted to the more lofty and challenging goals of participant development.

I find it remarkable that these observations, recorded in the 1920's, are so vital at present. In too many of our communities, public recreation is a mechanism for generating revenue that can be used to subsidize other government services. Elaborate fitness centers, complete with cardio-lounges, the latest array of Nautilus machines, spiraling waterslides, and annual fees that are well beyond the reach of half of the citizenry increasingly stand where playgrounds and community centers with open doors arguably ought to be. Are these developments a result of a well-founded ethical position or are they rather mindless, amoral responses to financial and political pressures to address the most current trend in the leisure time wants of middle and upper class citizens? I suspect the latter.

Perhaps we need a more thoughtful position on complex ethical questions associated with park and recreation service delivery as well. Among the important questions here is the contrast between services that emphasize development of communities as compared to services that emphasize the development of individuals. Before delving into that problem, it may be helpful to briefly review the meanings of community. The best description that I have read is a statement of John Winthrop, first Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony:

> *We must delight in each other, make others' conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our community as members of the same body?* (Peck, 1987, p. 26).

Public parks and recreation can play a central role in such development. Yet we seem to proceed with development of our fitness centers and other temples, blissfully inattentive to our opportunity to develop communities and to the ways that our services may actually diminish communities and advance divisiveness among members of different ethnic and social groups.

Public parks and recreation may also have a responsibility to the individual. In our introductory classes, we point to self-esteem, creative development, physical fitness, and numerous other characteristics as being a result of our work and the work of our professionals. We have even formalized our commitment to such outcomes through professional endorsement of the benefits-based programming philosophy.

But commitment to individuals and communities may require very different policies. A concrete example may illustrate. How should youth athletic leagues be formed? Should intact teams be accepted or should a system that promotes either community or similarity of skill levels across teams be used? The importance of this issue is revealed in the following personal case study. My daughter is growing up a lone among a neighborhood of Mormons. She is a small grain of sugar in a very big and powerful salt shaker. For the first seven years of her life, she was fully integrated into the community. She attended birthday parties, hosted and attended sleep-overs, played endlessly with her neighbors, both informally in our yards and driveways and formally on the community park soccer fields. I even coached the neighborhood soccer team. At the time of the eighth birthday of one of her dearest friends, one neighbor, a leader in the local ward, confided in me that eight is the age at which Mormon children are thought to be able to begin to distinguish right from wrong. At special baptism ceremonies, this friend's daughter was told, "choose your friends wisely." Immediately thereafter, a new soccer team was formed and registered at the local park and recreation department. My little girl was not invited to play on the team. I now understand what my African American friends with whom I grew up in Kentucky meant when they talked about discrimination. We can join the league, but we can't play on the team. A difference exists between inclusion and politeness.

The scenario that I describe, of course, implies value of the individual over the collective. It assumes that it is wrong to leave Gentiles and other minority groups out of the community. But communities are not necessarily physical places. Countless "nonplace" communities exist. Communities may be of scholars, professionals, neighbors, Christians, Hispanics, mandolin players, Gentiles, and Mormons. From this perspective, the athletic team-formulating policy that my community park and recreation agency uses works fine. It supports and is consistent with a

most remarkable and effective system of community functioning. My Mormon neighbors know each other well. They worship together, play together, and work together to improve their neighborhoods. In times of crisis, they support one another like no community that I have ever seen.

They even adopted me and my family once. My wife's car was stolen one afternoon, along with her purse and house keys. We were thus without transportation and in fear of the thief invading our home. Before sundown that day, one Mormon neighbor had offered to loan us his car, another brought us a sign warning passers by that our house was protected by a security system, and two others stopped by to see what else we needed. We were insiders that day. This is how the Mormon community works. It promotes cohesiveness and common experience among members. It is, in part, a result of a value of the collective over the individual. Registration of intact soccer teams supports and is fully consistent with this system.

So, should we promote the individual or the collective? I don't have a solution. My point is that we ought to struggle with these issues in order to produce informed policies that follow from critical thinking about the responsibilities and mission of our profession. We have a lot of work to do with respect to ethics in public parks and recreation.

J.B. Nash on Fitness

J.B. Nash was a recognized leader in health and physical education as well as in recreation. He was greatly concerned about meaningful activity and much of this work implied a degree of concern about fitness, or what he seemed to prefer to call "optimum health." "Activity," he asserted "should…contribute to health" (Nash, 1953, p. 117). In his later years, Nash fully endorsed President Eisenhower's reaction to research indicating that European youth were much more physically fit than the youth of the United States. He was thus a supporter of Eisenhower's "Council on Youth Fitness" and President Kennedy's subsequent "President's Council on Physical Fitness."

Nash would thus be very concerned about the fitness status of United States citizens. A recent Surgeon General report noted that 61% of adults in the United States are overweight or obese (BMI>25) and that obesity contributes significantly to 300,000 deaths per year and $117,000,000,000 (yes, that's 117 billion) in health care costs.

What is public parks and recreation doing to address this situation? The National Recreation and Park Association and community park and recreation departments seem to be embracing the problem. NRPA is involved in a number of initiatives designed to increase physical activity, decrease obesity, and improve general health. Among these initiatives are the following:

- Hearts and Parks Program
- Active Options
- Catch Recreation
- Promotion of access to grants that support health programs provided by public park and recreation agencies
- A formal partnership with between NRPA and the Department of Health and Human Services

In addition, it appears that facilities and services that may facilitate health are increasing. Each year brings additional miles of bicycle trails and walking trails. As mentioned previously, new and renovated fitness and recreation centers with the latest of exercise equipment are also appearing nationally to serve those who can afford memberships.

It seems imperative that we stay the course on the most successful of these efforts. Perhaps AALR should endorse health and active lifestyles as one of its priorities. Fitness and active living would seem to at least be of equal importance as such current AALR priorities as playground apparatus safety and leisure education in the schools.

Finally, as services and partnerships related to physical activity increase, I might remind us of the need to evaluate on-going services in terms of the extent to which they actually promote physical activity. A brief personal case study here may help. During the past seven months, I lost 50 pounds. The key, as you might guess, was exercise and diet. For the exercise portion, I (my wife, actually) found fees at a private fitness club that were over $100 less than a membership to a new public recreation fitness center in our community. In addition, when I look to public recreation for opportunities to be more active, I find few options. No sports leagues for which I could register as an individual and successfully compete as a middle-aged adult exist (options for entire teams of younger, regular players are, of course, are numerous). Given our commitment to such services for youth, I must wonder why so few counterparts exist for people at other stages of the life cycle. Are we contributing to the process of socializing people out of sport through our program offerings?

Concluding Thoughts

So, how did we do in our wrestling match with J.B. Nash? It seems to me that we have done rather well with respect to three of the four rounds of our match. We have made good progress with respect to understanding experiences, developing ethical positions, and promoting fitness. An enduring commitment is needed to sustain this progress.

We lost round one. The issue of "what ought a playground be?" should be revisited. Nash's vision of playgrounds provides much greater opportunity to build individuals and communities as compared to our more contemporary perspectives.

I have great optimism for the future. One of my favorite sections of the movie, Good Will Hunting involves a verbal exchange about the nobility of select occupations. That clip prompted me to evaluate my own profession in terms of nobility. I concluded that we are indeed a noble profession. We work diligently for the public good, with inadequate compensation and little to no opportunity for recognition for our work. How many participants think to call the director of parks and recreation when a new park or playground is developed? How many recreation leaders are recognized for teaching determination and inclusion to kids that they serve? How many of our students think of us when they succeed as professionals?

In addition to nobility, I believe that we collectively carry the spirit of my greatest sports hero, Pete Rose. Pete ended one season 72 hits short of a milestone, 3000 career hits. "How many at-bats," a reporter asked Pete, "will it take you to get the 300 hits?" "Seventy-two," replied Rose. "Surely

you don't expect to get a hit every time you go to the plate," commented the reporter. "Every time I go to the plate," Rose said, "I expect to get a hit." It is that attitude that helps us to also make a difference.

Finally, readers of books that J.B. Nash wrote notice how he weaves poetry into his arguments, to add color, definition, context, and significance. One of my favorites is about teachers, who may be found in public schools and universities, as well as on playgrounds and in community centers:

> Greeting his pupils, the master asked,
> "What would you learn of me?"
> And the reply came:
>
> How shall we care for our bodies?
> How shall we rear our children?
> How shall we work together?
> How shall we live with our fellowmen?
> How shall we play?
> For what ends shall we live?
>
> And the teacher pondered these words, and sorrow was in his heart,
> For his own learning touched not on those things.

Bibliography

Apter, M. (1997). Reversal theory: what is it? *The psychologist*. 10 (5), 217-220.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1988). The flow experience and its significance for human psychology. In M. Csikszentmihalyi & I. Csikszentmihalyi (Eds.), *Optimal experience: psychological studies of flow in consciousness*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Nash, J.B. (1927). *The organization and administration of playgrounds and recreation.* New York: A. S. Barnes and Company.

Nash, J.B. (1938). *Teachable moments.* New York: A.S. Barnes and Company.

Nash, J.B. (1942). *Building morale.* New York: A.S. Barnes and Company.

Nash, J. B. (1948). *Physical education its interpretations and objectives and its relationship to health education and recreation.* Dubuque, IA: Wm C. Brown Company Publishers.

Nash, J.B., Moench, F. J., & Saurborn, J. B. (1951). *Physical education: organization and administration.* New York: A.S. Barnes and Company.

Nash, J. B. (1953). *Philosophy of recreation and leisure.* Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Co., Inc.

Nash, J.B. (Ed.) (1965). *Recreation: pertinent readings guide posts to the future.* Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Co., Inc.

Peck, M.S. (1987) *The different drum: community making and peace.* New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc.

Seligman, M.E. P. (2002). *Authentic happiness.* New York: The Free Press.

Thomas, L. (1974). *The lives of a cell.* New York: Viking Press, Inc.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: J.B. Nash Lecture, 2003: Wrestling J.B. Nash	
Author(s): Gary D. Ellis	
Corporate Source: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance	Publication Date: April, 2003

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

☑

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

☐

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

☐

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: [signature]		Printed Name/Position/Title: Gary D. Ellis, PhD, Professor and Chair	
Organization/Address: Department of Parks, Recreation, & Tourism 250 South 1850 East Room 200 Salt Lake City, UT 84112-0920		Telephone: 801-581-4511	FAX: 801-581-4930
		E-Mail Address: Gary.Ellis@Health.Utah.edu	Date: 6/27/03

(over)

CLEARINGHOUSE ON TEACHING
AND TEACHER EDUCATION

ERIC

June 17, 2003

Dear Presenter:

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education invites you to contribute to the ERIC database by providing us with a copy of your paper presented at AAHPERD's 2003 National Convention & Exposition (April 1-5, 2003, Philadelphia, PA). Abstracts of documents that are accepted by ERIC are available through computers in both on-line and CD/ROM versions. The ERIC database is accessed worldwide and is used by teachers, administrators, researchers, students, policymakers, and others with an interest in education.

AACTE
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION
1307
NEW YORK AVE., NW
SUITE 300
WASHINGTON, DC
20005-4701
202/293-2450
FAX: 202/457-8095

Inclusion of your work provides you with a permanent archive and contributes to the overall development of materials in ERIC. The full text of your contribution will be accessible that are housed at libraries throughout the country and through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service. Documents are reviewed and accepted based on their contribution to education, timeliness, relevance, methodology, effectiveness of presentation, and reproduction quality.

To disseminate your work through ERIC, you need to fill out and sign the **Reproduction Release Form** on the back of this letter and include it with a letter-quality copy of your paper. You can mail the materials to: **The ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education, 1307 New York Ave., N.W., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20005.** Please feel free to photocopy the release form for future or additional submissions.

Should you have further questions, please contact me at 1-800-822-9229; or E-mail: lkelly@aacte.org.

Sincerely,

Linda M. Kelly
Acquisitions and Outreach Coordinator

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: info@ericfac.piccard.csc.com
WWW: http://ericfacility.org